

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN REMEMBRANCE OF HIS
HOLINESS KAREKIN I

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 30, 1999

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, today in Armenia, the spiritual leader of the Armenian Apostolic Church passed away after a serious illness. I was saddened to learn of the death of His Holiness Karekin I, the Catholicos of the Armenian Church.

Elected as the 131st leader of the Armenian Church following the death of Vazgen I in 1995, Karekin I called for a peaceful solution in Nagorno Karabagh.

Karekin I, who led the church for 4 years, spent much of his time visiting with the faithful, who live in many different areas of the world. Prior to rising to become the Catholicos, His Holiness was educated at Oxford, England, and he served the church in Lebanon, Iran and New York.

His Holiness was an important world figure. He was among the most prominent spiritual leaders—a man who was important not only to Armenians but to people of all faiths. He was a well-respected figure throughout America. Not only did Karekin I serve the church in New York, but he also visited communities throughout the United States frequently.

As millions of Armenians mourn his passing, we will all feel a deep loss. He stood for peace and justice. He was known as an eloquent and passionate orator. He worked with other religious leaders to strengthen the ties and understanding between people of different faiths.

Karekin I led a church whose history dates back to 301 A.D., when King Trdat III proclaimed Christianity as the state religion of Armenia. For much of the past fifteen centuries, the Armenian Church and its spiritual leaders have been the embodiment of the national aspirations of the Armenian people.

As the people of Armenia move forward towards peace and prosperity, it is important to remember those who have helped lead the way. The commitment of Karekin I to the faith and to the Armenian people will not be forgotten.

DOING GOOD FOR HUD

HON. CHAKA FATTAH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 30, 1999

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I commend the following article to my colleagues from The Philadelphia Inquirer on the Department of Housing and Urban Development's activities in Philadelphia.

[From the Philadelphia Inquirer, June 22, 1999]

DOING GOOD FOR HUD

FOR A BUREAUCRACY, IT'S A STARTLING MOVE: SENDING SKILLED PROFESSIONALS OUT OF THEIR OFFICES WITH SWEEPING ORDERS TO HELP PEOPLE. THEY ARE "COMMUNITY BUILDERS" IN WHAT HUD SECRETARY ANDREW CUOMO CALLS "AN URBAN PEACE CORPS."

(By Maida Odom)

John Carpenter drives past rubbish-filled lots in Philadelphia, wondering if there's some way to get them into the hands of owners who would clean them up.

Cynthia Jetter solves problems and investigates complaints from advocates for the disabled—the same people who last month protested outside her employer, the U.S. Office of Housing and Urban Development in Washington.

And Michael Levine, a career Washington bureaucrat now in Philadelphia, is getting to see some of the social programs he helped design. "When you come in and meet people in a situation, you realize no program in itself is going to solve the problem," he says.

They are executives who have left their offices—"outsiders" with connections, insiders now on the street.

They are HUD employees, members of a unique group of two-year "fellows" called community builders. Handpicked from inside and outside HUD, these special workers—about 900 at 81 offices nationwide, and 26 in Pennsylvania—have an extremely broad mandate: Do good.

Jetter was a HUD employee who left to work at the Philadelphia Housing Authority and then returned. Carpenter formerly headed a Community Development Corp. Both are assigned to the Philadelphia office, as is Levine.

HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo, who announced the program in March of 1998, dubbed these "fellows" an "urban Peace Corps"—knowledgeable professionals from private industry, social services, other branches of government and elsewhere temporarily added to a HUD talent pool that has been winnowed through years of budget cuts.

Karen Miller, who heads HUD's mid-Atlantic region, which is based here, helped write the "community builders" job description.

"What has been expected of HUD's staff was schizophrenic," she said. HUD bureaucrats were the "cops" who guarded public dollars, she said, while at the same time they were expected to offer technical assistance to the people being monitored.

"The Secretary [Cuomo] separated the two roles," she said. "The great majority [of HUD employees] are still defenders of public dollars," involved in awarding grants, moving applications through the system and monitoring spending.

"Community builders are the ones who go out and work with the community and help them do what they want and need to do."

In almost two decades as a Washington-based bureaucrat, Levine saw himself getting further away from his personal career goal "to go out and help communities develop."

As a HUD executive he was writing programs and evaluating projects. Eventually, there were few fact-finding trips into the field to see firsthand what he was planning and administering.

About half the community builders are like Levine, people who had worked inside

HUD and are now getting a chance to see their work in action.

Being in the area of welfare-to-work for about a year has been eye-opening, he said. Over that period, Levine has arranged for more than 700 people—public-housing managers and tenant leaders—to get special briefings explaining the new welfare-reform laws.

In Washington, he had administered and written a program offering public-housing tenant councils \$100,000 grants to develop job opportunities. "They didn't want to spend the money for fear of getting into trouble," Levine said.

Now, as a community builder, he's helping bring together public and private sources to create computer centers at public housing developments. "A computer center is a place where children can go after school, where adults can get the literacy they need," he said.

"When I ran that program in Washington I didn't see the money being used that way. You get a different perspective. You don't realize the nuances.

"It's not like I learned any big new things to shock me. But things are much clearer now."

Before she met Jetter, Nancy Salandra, project coordinator for the Pennsylvania Action Coalition for Disability Rights in Housing, generally found herself fighting to get HUD to listen.

Jetter has been "a terrific person to work with," Salandra said. "What she says she's going to do, she does."

"She has the knowledge; she has the understanding of housing; she has the understanding about HUD; and she understands how the system overwhelms people."

In addition to meeting with groups that usually come to HUD with complaints, Jetter is bringing together people who work on housing for veterans and disabled and homeless people. She also is trying to organize a tracking method to keep up with who needs services and who's receiving them.

"We need to track the impact of programs [and] track housing, and we can better address the needs of the population."

Jetter worked for HUD for 14 years before taking over as head of resident services at the Philadelphia Housing Authority. She left there for a research project at the Manpower Demonstration Research Corp. in New York. Last fall, she rejoined HUD as a community builder. When Jetter left HUD, she thought she'd never go back. For most of her years with the agency, she felt it was growing farther away from the people it served.

People "were numbers," she said. "This is a big step for HUD to take people in from the outside. And the response has been overwhelming. P.R. for HUD is a big part of it. We go to every meeting we can, try to be as visible as possible. After a meeting, people are almost knocking you down to get your card."

"We used to be the ones who said 'Gotcha!' Now people can talk to us before they get into trouble."

Carpenter, who formerly headed the New Kensington Community Development Corp., where he won praise for clearing and reusing vacant lots, joined HUD last summer. In this job he's been able to pull together people he could not have assembled in his old job.

For example, a group of American Street area residents and representatives of a community development corporation there were

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